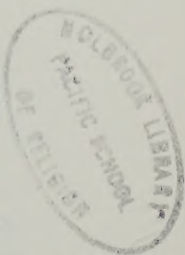


The Hymn

July 1972



Greetings from Great Britain

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Hymn Society of America, the following message was received from the Rev. Dr. Erik R. Routley, editor of *The Bulletin* of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and a prominent hymnologist and author:

"I know that my fellow members of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland would wish me to send you our heartiest congratulations on your fiftieth anniversary. Although we are very much the junior partner in this business, both our societies are old enough to remember days very different from those in which we now find ourselves. I suppose that both bodies were founded in days when hymnological study was a fairly new branch of learning, and when a pedagogic approach, with much emphasis on raising standards, was expected of us. We are now in the middle of a hymn-explosion, in both our countries, in which new hymns, new hymnals, new kinds of lyric and tune, seem to appear almost every week. Styles which our founders would sometimes have admired, but sometimes would have viewed with horror, are now accepted; experiments whose value we are at present quite unable to assess are almost more normal than orthodox worship and hymnody. Stirring times, indeed! There is certainly no less need than there was in 1922 for a body of responsible and alert people to guide, and where possible to assist in forming, the hymnological taste of the churches, and it is a most heart-warming thing to see in both our societies a fully ecumenical approach to this important duty. With our warm felicitations to the Hymn Society of America come our best wishes for the next half-century of work. You have much to be proud of, and much to hope for."

Two New Hymn Contests

Key '73 Song Contest

Young and old throughout the nation are challenged and invited to write "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," according to a report released by the Executive Committee of *Key '73*. Compositions are asked for in five categories: (1) Gospel song; (2) Contemporary-conventional (hymns); (3) Contemporary (country-western, electronic); (4) Folk; (5) Rock-jazz. Each song submitted is to convey a telling witness of God's love in Jesus Christ in music and language which is fresh, understandable, and in the imagery of our modern day.

New songs and texts are preferred, cast in the style of today's conversational language. Songs submitted will be judged by national music leaders, prizes will be awarded, and the winning songs submitted for denominational use in corporate worship as a part of the *Key '73* emphasis. Guidelines can be secured from denominations participating in *Key '73* or by contacting the *Key '73* office (address below).

The contest ends October 1, 1972. All songs, text and music, should be submitted to: Dr. Conrad Thompson, *Key '73*, Phase Four Committee Chairman, 418 Olive Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63102.

School Hymn for Praise

Evangelical Theological Seminary, Naperville, Illinois 60540, is seeking a new hymn for its centennial celebration during the 1972-73 academic year. The hymn is not intended to be a "school song" but a hymn of praise from a contemporary perspective. The hymn should be accompanied by a suggested hymn tune.

The writer whose hymn is selected will be an honored guest at the Centennial Banquet in February, 1973, and the hymn will be used throughout the year at major occasions. Persons wishing to submit a hymn should send it to the Centennial Committee by October 1, 1972, at the Naperville address.

The Hymn

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The President's Message

“**S**ING WITH SPIRIT AND UNDERSTANDING,” is the title of the history of the Hymn Society of America, written and compiled by William Watkins Reid. This challenging phrase is a condensation of a passage from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Suggested as a motto for the Society, it was wisely adopted, and has served as a guide in evaluating hymns published for congregational singing.

In celebrating this 50th anniversary of the Society it is only natural to recall the inspiration for such a venture and the original intent of the founders. They, and the charter members who joined them, were for the most part actively engaged in pastoral work, or in the publication of hymnbooks. Miss Emily Swan Perkins, the founder of the Society, was also well aware of the difficulty of finding good new hymns, for she was a composer and herself edited a hymnal.

At her home in Riverdale, New York, close friends met from time to time, gathered around the piano, and sang hymns, commenting on their poetic and musical strengths and weaknesses. After one of these sessions, Miss Perkins spontaneously suggested the founding of a “hymn society.” This idea may have surprised her friends, but they recognized the need of a group to obtain hymns in various categories, evaluate them, and serve as a medium between author and publisher.

Following the first World War, America was entering a period of world influence, and it was a time when peace stimulated the arts. Hence, 1922 was a propitious year for establishing the Society and seeking new hymns, for a new age. Over the years, the Society has initiated many hymn projects which to date have produced about twenty-five hymn pamphlets and more than 300 hymns. Many of these, including some sung today, have found their way into recent hymnals.

As the scope of the Society widened, chapters were established in cities throughout the country. With available funds twenty-eight scholarly Papers were published, as well as a quarterly periodical, *The Hymn*, now in its twenty-third year, and the preparation of the *Dictionary of American Hymnology* is gradually progressing. All of this has been accomplished by the generous voluntary contribution of time and talent by members of the Executive Committee and the members of the Society.

Within a few years, the Society became well known in foreign countries. In a 1928 hymn project, the “Airman's Hymn,” the first choice was that of an Englishwoman. Incidentally, the first tune,

please turn to page 91

Nature and the Hymnbook

KENT DANNEN

JOHN MUIR, perhaps America's greatest conservationist, often used musical allusions to convey his religious feelings about nature. "Every rock temple then becomes a temple of music," he wrote of the Grand Canyon, "every spire and pinnacle an angel of light and song, shouting color hallelujahs."¹ Of a quiet evening in Alaska he reminisced, "I had nothing to do but look and listen and join the trees in their hymns and prayers."²

Also Muir heard famous hymn tunes, such as "Old Hundredth," in the noises of wild animals, and he tried to communicate with them through hymn singing. He had little success in using this technique to communicate to wilderness creatures his love for them. And we well might ask how successfully hymns communicate to humans a love for wilderness and the natural things in God's creation.

For the most part, hymnals present a very positive attitude toward nature. Many have a section labeled "God in Nature" or "His Works in Creation" or something similar. And in every hymnal that contains such a section there are hymns in other sections which also could have been included with the nature hymns. For example, the famous hymn of St. Francis of Assisi, "All Creatures of Our God and King," is included in the nature section of *The Hymnbook* of the Presbyterians but in a different section of *Hymnbook for Christian Worship* used by the Disciples of Christ and the American Baptist Convention. However, "All Things Bright and Beautiful" is found in the nature section of *Hymnbook for Christian Worship* but in the children's section of *The Hymnbook*. Thus, appreciation of God's natural creation can be found scattered throughout a hymnal as well as concentrated in one section.

Two kinds of appreciation for nature are explicit in hymnals. First, nature is seen as a revelation of various aspects of God. Second,

¹ John Muir, *Steep Trails*, William Frederic Badé, ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), p. 361.

² John Muir, *Travels in Alaska*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), p. 23.

Note: The author of this article is a naturalist who is also a student at Lexington (Kentucky) Theological Seminary. His study is especially timely in view of growing interest in nature and ecology.

there are hymns which thank God for blessing his creatures with the benefits of nature. Also, an implicit positive attitude toward nature is expressed through use of poetic allusions taken from nature.

One example of nature serving a revelatory role is "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee," by Henry van Dyke. This hymn was inspired by the beautiful Berkshire hills near Williamstown, Massachusetts, where van Dyke was guest preacher at Williams College. The poetic power of the hymn is clear evidence of the truth of Muir's claim that high places have wrought beneficial effects on preachers.³

Of the four stanzas in this hymn, the second best describes how nature reveals "God of glory, Lord of Love":

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Van Dyke quite appropriately picked "Hymn to Joy," adapted from Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, as the tune for a hymn that describes the joyous revelation of God's glory through nature.

Another aspect of God, his all-pervading presence, as revealed through nature, is expressed in Maltbie D. Babcock's "This Is My Father's World." The most popular of Dr. Babcock's hymns, it was first published with sixteen stanzas in his *Thoughts for Everyday Living* in 1901. Of the three stanzas now used the first two best express God's immanence in his creation:

This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world;
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world:
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare their Maker's praise.

³ *Steep Trails*, op. cit., p. 48.

This is my Father's world;
He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

The tune to which "This Is My Father's World" always is sung is called "Terra Beata" or "Terra Patris." The former translates as "blessed earth," the latter as "Father's earth." Either name is very appropriate for the tune of this hymn, and carries out the theme of appreciation for "spaceship earth."

In worship services, Babcock's hymn often is used when the theme of the message is the Incarnation. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. . . ." The words of the hymn also call to mind the Old Testament text, "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

Explicitly and purposefully referring to Genesis is another hymn which emphasizes the creative aspect of God— "We [or I] Sing the Mighty Power of God," by Isaac Watts. In fact, Watts termed this a hymn of "praise for creation and providence."

The first two stanzas of Watt's hymn are basically a paraphrase of the first chapter of Genesis. They are a well done, but usual, accounting of God's glories in nature. But in the third stanza is a theological point that stands at variance with some other popular hymns—a point that is very important to the appreciation of wilderness:

There's not a plant or flower below,
But makes thy glories known;
And clouds arise, and tempests blow,
By order from thy throne.
While all that borrows life from thee
Is ever in thy care,
And everywhere that man can be,
Thou, God, art present there.

Contrary to some nature hymns, which include only the pleasant aspects of nature, Watts here refers to clouds and tempest in a context that casts them in the same positive light as flowers. Not only is controlled gentle nature extolled as revelatory of God, but also, wild, violent nature.

Further, the stanza relegates man to a position of fellow creature with animals, and plants, and perhaps implicitly with earth itself. "All that borrows life from thee," [emphasis added] says Watts, "is ever in thy care." He probably was thinking of Jesus' references to birds and lilies being cared for by God (Matt. 6:26-30). But today this verse

implies also the kind of attitude toward non-human creation called for by conservationist Aldo Leopold, namely that the ethics of the Decalogue and the Golden Rule be extended beyond *Homo sapiens*, even to the earth itself.

Of the nature hymns, those which see creation as revelatory of God form the largest group. But also significant are those nature hymns which offer praise and thanks to God.

One of these is "All Creatures of Our God and King." To St. Francis of Assisi all creation was testimony of God's love, and all living things were objects of love. In his great humility, he saw all creatures as his brothers and sisters.

This famous hymn is said to be the first genuinely religious poem written in Italian. The original text seems to praise God *for* all his creatures. In the English paraphrase by William Draper, the creatures are called upon to themselves praise God. But whichever interpretation is favored, the effect is to place the natural creation in a positive light.

As with Watts, both tame and wild nature are good. "Rushing wind" and "flowing water" are equal blessings with flowers and fruits. Further, all creation is seen as loving, like a mother:

Dear mother earth, who day by day
Unfoldest blessings on our way,
Oh, praise Him! Alleluia!
The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,
Let them His glory also show!

Another nature hymn, which has even more clearly a theme of thanks is "For the Beauty of the Earth," by Folliott S. Pierpoint. Although inspired by the joys of a spring day near Bath, England, this hymn originally was intended for the communion service. It contained eight stanzas and included references to the Lord's Supper. Subsequently, it was shortened and altered into a hymn of praise that usually is included in the nature section of hymnals.

This hymn does not catalog aspects of nature to the extent that some other nature hymns do. However, the broad descriptions of blessings for which to be thankful include the whole spectrum of natural phenomena better than any listing.

For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies,

Lord of all to thee we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,
Sun and moon, and stars of light,

Lord of all, etc.

For the joy of ear and eye,
For the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight,

Lord of all, etc.

Besides those hymns which explicitly present nature positively, there are those which do so by implication through allusions taken from the natural world. Perhaps the clearest example of this is "God Who Touchest Earth with Beauty," by Mary S. Edgar. A prize hymn in a 1926 contest conducted by the American Camping Association, it begins with a plea for recreation, in the original sense of that word:

God, who touchest earth with beauty,
Make my heart anew;
With Thy Spirit recreate me,
Pure and strong and true.

The following stanzas are composed of similes comparing various virtues to natural features familiar to outdoorsmen:

Like Thy springs and running waters
Make me crystal pure;
Like Thy rocks of towering grandeur
Make me strong and sure.

Like Thy dancing waves in sunlight
Make me glad and free;
Like the straightness of the pine trees
Let me upright be.

Like the arching of the heavens
Lift my thoughts above;
Turn my dreams to noble action—
Ministries of love.

The hymn closes with a reiteration of the plea for recreation and also for God's continuing presence:

God, who touches earth with beauty,
Make my heart anew;
Keep me ever, by Thy Spirit,
Pure and strong and true.

"God Who Touched Earth with Beauty" has been translated into six different languages and appears in many hymnbooks. Naturally, its greatest popularity still rests with those aspects of Christian spiritual activity which are most closely connected with nature. For example, it is the "camp hymn" of the YWCA of the Rockies.

However, it may well be that the greatest potential for this kind of hymn is in the normal Sunday-morning worship service. These allusions to the natural creation can be termed "bold" in light of the great extent to which the Kingdom of God has been internalized and nature treated as mere scenery in modern theology. But it would be more proper to term such allusions "biblical" because precedent for them is established throughout the Bible. The injection of nature images into the worship service through hymns might do much to strengthen the spiritual life of the Church and, further, give the Church some impetus to create a positive attitude toward wilderness in society at large.

There are selections in the hymnbooks which work exactly contrary to that goal. One such hymn is "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence." It dates from the fifth century and the Liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem. Like many Greek hymns of this period, it has primarily an other-world focus:

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,
For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth
Our full homage to demand.

The Church at the time of this hymn was developing the attitude of the Kingdom of God coming after death. It was not this world that was important, but the next. Thus, nature, wild or tame, was an unfit subject for contemplation or concern.

A more recent hymn that also looks to the afterlife with disparagement of earth is "Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing," written by John Fawcett in the 1770's. Although often used as a closing hymn, its theme is a parting more drastic than that of a dismissed congregation. This hymn indicates that the attitude, which saw the present life as something unpleasant to be gotten out of as soon as God allowed the exit, continued on in the Church for a thousand years.

Actually, the hymn starts pleasantly enough, and not until the last line of the first stanza does anti-earth sentiment come in:

Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing;
Fill our hearts with joy and peace;
Let us each, Thy love possessing,

Triumph in redeeming grace:
 O refresh us, O refresh us,
 Traveling through this wilderness.

Before 1774, the last line read: "In this dry and barren place." Since the geographic areas which English translations of the Bible term "wilderness" certainly are dry and barren, the alteration seems logical. Perhaps it represents an attempt to make the hymn less negative. However, many conservationists would argue, the internal logic of the hymn is based on a false premise, namely that earthly existence is essentially negative. These same conservationists likely would agree that, if one wishes to deny the blessings of the present life, denying the goodness of the wilderness is the power place to start, for it is one of the greatest of God's blessings.

Negative toward nature, especially wild nature, though these hymns are, they still can serve a valuable function in the hymnbook. They no longer are used in the way for which they originally were intended. Thus, most worshippers who sing them do not understand the actual meaning of the words. Careful alteration can change the present words to conform with the present use, eliminate negative references to the earthly life, and still preserve the traditional forms. When this task is accomplished, a service can begin with "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence," end with "Lord Dismiss us with Thy Blessing," have a sermon on conservation as stewardship, and be consistent throughout.

Running counter to the world-denying tradition throughout the history of the Church has been a world-affirming one. This affirmation often has taken the form of a positive attitude toward nature. Although not particularly apparent in the earliest Christian hymns (written in Greek), it is found in the writings of the post-Apostolic Fathers. Clement, Bishop of Rome, for example, uses many allusions to nature to explain his theological points.

Some of the Latin hymns, however, do exhibit a positive attitude toward nature. "All Creatures of Our God and King" probably is the best example. It is particularly significant that St. Francis could write this world-affirming hymn while living the life of an ascetic.

Very different in lifestyle from St. Francis was another Latin hymnist, Venantius Fortunatus. This high-living ecclesiastic wrote hundreds of years before St. Francis, but displayed many of the same attitudes toward nature. For example, the second stanza of his "Welcome, Happy Morning!" depicts nature as praising God:

Earth her joy confesses, clothing her for spring,
 All fresh gifts returned with her returning King:

Bloom in every meadow, leaves on every bough,
 Speak His sorrow ended, hail His triumph now.

The Reformation saw increased appreciation of nature. Swiss Reformers Calvin and Zwingli were very favorably impressed by nature in all its aspects. Zwingli translated Psalm 23, "He maketh me to lie down in alpine meadows." Calvin saw creation as one means whereby we might see an otherwise invisible God.

Calvinists were enthusiastic singers, but were against the use of hymns of human composure—too great a chance for heresy to creep in. Thus, their main song book, *The Geneva Psalter*, is represented in most hymnbooks only by tunes. The metrical rendition of the Bible's free verse, which the Calvinists insisted on using, is too cumbersome for modern hymnals. However, many of these metrical psalms necessarily carry a favorable attitude toward all nature—necessarily because this attitude is in the Bible, and the Calvinists demanded exact adherence to the Book.

Lutherans, although they could be enthusiastic about those aspects of nature easily interpreted as God's blessing on man, were not well-inclined toward wild nature. Nevertheless, Joachim Neander, sometimes called the first poet of the Reformed Church in Germany, wrote a hymn very popular today which does imply an acceptance of the goodness of all nature. "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" is a paraphrase of Psalms 103 and 150. The second stanza is especially strong in nature imagery and appreciation of the blessings of creation:

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously
 reigneth,
 Who, as on wings of an eagle uplifted, sustaineth.
 Hast thou not seen?
 All that is needful hath been
 Granted in what he ordaineth.

Neander's paraphrase of Psalm 19 is of the nature-as-revelation type. The third stanza makes the point:

See how He hath everywhere
 Made this earth so rich and fair;
 Hill and vale and fruitful land,
 All things living, show His hand.

Following soon after Neander, Issac Watts established English hymnody and displaced the use of metrical psalms. But as we have seen above, he faithfully preserved the Bible's favorable attitude toward the natural creation. Joseph Addison, around the same time was publishing hymns in *The Spectator* which carried out the same theme. Perhaps the best known of these is "The Spacious Firmament on

High," which states that the skies proclaim, "The hand that made us is divine."

The nature appreciation of the eighteenth century hymn writers was enriched by the contribution of William Cowper's "God Moves in a Mysterious Way." The greatest English poet of his age, Cowper included this hymn in the famous collection, *Olney Hymns*, which he and his friend John Newton compiled. The first stanza clearly cites wild nature as an instrument of God's will:

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Nature hymns became increasingly common with the explosion of hymnody in general in the nineteenth century. Pierpont and Babcock worked in that century, and the Unitarians also produced significant writers of nature hymns—William Cullen Bryant and Henry Ware.

In his poem "Forest Hymn" Bryant wrote, "The groves were God's first temples." This idea was influential on later conservationists; it is quoted by both Muir and Liberty Hyde Bailey. The same theme is carried out in Bryant's "O Thou, Whose Own Vast Temple Stands":

O thou, whose own vast temple stands
Built over earth and sea,
Accept the walls that human hands
Have raised to worship thee.

Henry Ware served with Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson as copastor of the Second Unitarian Church of Boston. That the two men were alike in their attitude toward nature is evidenced by Ware's hymn, "All Nature's Works His Praise Declare":

All nature's works His praise declare,
To whom they all belong;
There is a voice in every star,
In every breeze a song.
Sweet music fills the world abroad
With strains of love and power;
The stormy sea sings praise to God,
The thunder and the shower.

The praise ranges from "sweet music" to the wild chorus of stormy sea, thunder and shower. To Ware, both tame and wild nature serve positive functions.

The development of nature hymns has continued in the twentieth

century. A good example is van Dyke's "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee." This century has seen the spread of conservation concerns from the elite few to the masses. Hence, nature hymns have gained proportionate popularity.

The 1970's are termed the Decade of Ecology. In response to this expanding interest in the natural creation, The Hymn Society of America has announced a competition, the results of which will be a collection of "Environmental Stewardship Hymns." The Hymn Society feels that there has been a dearth of this particular emphasis in nature hymns.

However, a very strong beginning already has been made in the popular Stuart Hine hymn, "How Great Thou Art." This hymn has an extremely complicated background, beginning with an 1885 poem by a Swede, Carl Boberg. Boberg's poem had been translated into several languages, including English, by 1925. Hine heard the Russian translation in 1927. Experiences of God's grandeur in the Carpathian Mountains inspired Hine to do another English translation (the first one, by E. Gustov Johnson, never gained much popularity):

O Lord My God! When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made.
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed,

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze,

Then sings my soul, etc.*

In conclusion, we can see that the hymnbook does communicate an attitude toward wilderness and other natural things that is basically positive. There are some hymns inconsistent with this attitude, but even these are gradually being transformed to a neutral position on the subject of wilderness values. The future of nature hymns seems bright. Increasing interest in conservation and related topics will produce new nature hymns, more diverse in theme and more explicit in emphasis.

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A Cultural Understanding of Hymnody

HARRY ESKEW

IN A RECENT ARTICLE entitled "Church Music in Pluralistic Society," the German church music composer Heinz Werner Zimmermann made the following statement:

The pluralism of our musical styles, which is a counterpart to the pluralism of our time, is a loss as long as the different styles stand off from one another and wage war without understanding. It is abundance [i.e., fruitful], however, as soon as the different styles are brought together in polyphonic reconciliation.¹

By "different styles stand off from one another and wage war without understanding," the author is really referring to people, for we humans compose music and either understand it or don't understand it. Part of the reason for a lack of understanding may be found in the pluralism cited by Zimmermann: we have a pluralistic society, and this pluralistic society produces a pluralism of musical styles. Rather than pitting these musical styles against one another in battle, Zimmermann suggests, we can be fruitful by bringing them together in a reconciliation. It is my hope that a cultural understanding will make a positive contribution to this reconciliation of musical styles.

As related to the topic, church music, including hymnody, is a cultural expression reflecting values upheld by certain cultural entities. Each culture group in our pluralistic society will reflect its own values in its choice of hymnody. This is why a fashionable suburban church may espouse one type of hymnody and a ghetto store-front church may hold to a hymnody of an utterly different type. And this is why native expressions of church song are gradually supplanting many Western importations among Christians of strongly nationalistic developing countries.

How are we to understand a hymn? Each student of hymnody brings to his task his own particular biases or guiding interests. By and large, hymnologists have held biases other than those of the student of culture. Hymns have been studied extensively as works of

¹Heinz Werner Zimmermann, "Church Music in Pluralistic Society," *Music Ministry* 4:7 (March 1972), 10.

(Dr. Harry Eskew is a professor in the School of Church Music, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisiana. This paper was presented by Dr. Eskew at the annual meeting of the Hymn Society of America on May 6, 1972.)

literature or music, and judged by certain aesthetic standards of what constitutes good literature or good music. Similarly, the theological content of hymn texts has been studied and evaluated from various theological perspectives. Hymns have also been dealt with as historical events; their relationship with both past and future has been evaluated by historians writing from the perspective of their own time. Whether a hymnologist's interest be from the perspective of literature, music, theology or history, his understanding is conditioned by the particular bias or biases he brings to his study. Furthermore, each particular bias or guiding interest has a contribution to make to an understanding of hymnody.

While acknowledging the helpfulness of a bias to an understanding of hymnody, it must also be recognized that a bias may be so strong that such a one-sided approach to hymnody is presented that actually obscures a real understanding. As an example of a one-sided bias, note the beginning of the section dealing with gospel hymnody in Howard's *Our American Music*:

Conservative churchgoers, and the members of liturgical congregations, are apt to raise their eyebrows at the so-called "gosepl songs!" They feel that if religion is to be held as a noble part of our daily or weekly lives, music better fitted to the dance hall will hardly preserve its nobility.

The songs, of course, have a distinct mob value, and have been highly useful in swaying crowds at revival meetings.²

It is obvious that this writer was not interested in understanding gospel hymnody. Since this hymnody did not originate in or become a significant part of the worship of the more liturgical congregations, why did the author go out of his way to mention their opinion? This is almost like giving the Ku Klux Klan's opinion of the freedom songs of the Civil Rights Movement.

Cultural Understanding

What is meant by cultural understanding? Culture, as used in this paper, refers to a basic concept of anthropology: "a way of life belonging to a designated aggregate of people." A culture includes "man-made artifacts, activities people perform, and ideas and feelings."³ Viewed in this way, such human activities as hymn-writing, hymn-tune composing and hymn singing are cultural expressions;

² John Tasker Howard, *Our American Music* 3rd ed. rev. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1946), pp. 605-06.

³ John J. Honigsmann, *Understanding Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 3.

they are expressions of a way of life of "a designated aggregate of people."

Although these hymnic activities may be understood as cultural expressions, this is only part of what is meant by cultural understanding. Cultural understanding, as viewed by anthropologists, refers to an approach to culture that leads to understanding. This approach involves seeing any cultural expression in its fullest possible context. Viewing any bit of culture in context involves relating it to other relevant factors present at the same time, such as religion, economy, family life and politics.⁴

As stated by Honigsmann, understanding culture in its context involves answering two questions: "What is the purpose or meaning of this behavior or artifact? What are its functions?"⁵

Therefore to understand any aspect of cultural in context, we must determine its purpose and function. Thus we may ask: What is the purpose of this hymn? What is the function of this hymn? These questions, however, are to be asked in cultural context, so let us extend them somewhat: What is the purpose of this hymn in its cultural context? What is the function of this hymn in its cultural context?

This approach to understanding culture by its context and function is sometimes known as cultural relativism, a method utilized in ethnology and social anthropology. The method of cultural relativism involves adopting a perspective other than our own. The student of culture ideally perceives and describes a cultural object from the perspective of the participants in the culture being studied. Cultural relativism also assumes the ability of the student to transcend or temporarily eliminate his own cultural values and seek with imagination and empathy to assume those of a participant in the culture being studied. The question he asks is not, therefore, what meaning does this cultural expression have for me, but rather, what meaning does it have for the participants in its own culture?⁶

As applied to hymnody, the student seeking a cultural understanding would attempt to view a hymn from the standpoint of its purpose and function within its cultural context. Obviously this approach requires more than merely studying the words and music of a hymn from a page in a hymnal. The hymn has meaning as literature, music and theology, but it also has a cultural meaning. To get

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶ David Bidley, "Culture: Cultural Relativism," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Ed., David L. Sills. Vol. 3. (New York: The Macmillan Co. and The Free Press, 1968), p. 543.

at this cultural meaning or understanding, one approaches the hymn according to the method of cultural relativism.

Hymns as Cultural Expressions

If we accept the view that hymns are cultural expressions and that their cultural meaning is relative to the culture of which they are a part, what implications does this view have for hymnologists? Certainly this view means that we do not have an adequate understanding of hymns as they relate to the people who create, publish, and sing them until we study hymns as cultural expressions. Furthermore, it is to be recognized that one can not only understand hymns from studying their cultural origins but that one can also come to a greater understanding of a culture by studying its hymns. To illustrate the cultural approach to hymns, several examples of cultural understanding will be cited.

Examples of Cultural Understanding

Diverse types and styles.—When understood culturally, the existence of diverse types and styles of hymns is more easily accepted and respected, because they are seen in their own context and function. While it is true, for example, that Luther in the sixteenth century and Ira D. Sankey in the later nineteenth century used popular folk-like tunes to spread the gospel, it makes little sense culturally to say that either one of these bodies of hymns is inherently superior to the other. Each was the outgrowth of a distinctively different culture and each should be respected as such. The chorales of Luther functioned in a liturgical service quite different from the informal revival atmosphere of the gospel hymns of Sankey. The point is that each type of hymn functioned successfully within its own distinctive cultural environment.

Cultural conflicts.—Certain developments in hymnody can be more clearly understood as cultural conflicts rather than simply as the triumph of the good over the inferior. For example, the singing controversy in certain New England churches of the early eighteenth century may be regarded as the conflict between the cultural tastes of the Harvard-educated pastors and their unlettered congregations, who preferred to sing hymns as they had learned them in oral tradition. This singing has been rightly called the "Early New England Folk Style" by Gilbert Chase.⁷ The folk singing of hymns in lining-out fashion continues to this day in certain more isolated congregations. In the following recording we hear an example of a Primitive Baptist con-

⁷ Gilbert Chase, *America's Music* 2nd ed. rev. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), pp. 29ff.

gregation in Sparta, North Carolina, lining-out the hymn "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah."⁸ Note that lining-out is an organic musical form: the leader sings in a rapid recitative-like style while the congregation sings in a slow tempo that allows time for their embellishments.

This example of a folk style of congregational singing must be viewed in its own cultural context in order to understand it. To call it inferior congregational singing is simply to miss the point. Indeed, what we hymnologists may regard as inferior may be judged superior by a different culture group.

Denominational diversity.—America is well known for its religious pluralism, an aspect of our life many Europeans find difficult to understand. This religious pluralism, resulting in so many different denominations is not only a matter of theological diversity; it is also a case of cultural diversity. In the popular book published in 1959, *The Status Seekers*, Vance Packard included a chapter on social status as reflected in America's church bodies entitled "The Long Road from Pentecostal to Episcopal."

By and large, the status churches have received the lion's share of attention from hymnologists and the denominations of lesser status have been neglected. Look, for example, at surveys of hymnody for information on hymnody among Pentecostals or Black Baptists and you will find little or nothing. There has also been a tendency in recent years to emphasize the core of hymns found common to various church hymnals and cite this as evidence of a growing ecumenicity in hymnody. The difficulty with this procedure is that only the hymnals of the respectable older denominations are usually considered. The point here is that American hymnody reflects a cultural pluralism much greater than that reflected in recent hymnological studies. I believe that a cultural understanding of hymnody can help us to appreciate both the unity and diversity of the hymnody of America's churches.

Ethnic group diversity.—One of the struggles of the church in New Testament times was the conflict over whether Christianity was to be for one nation or for all men, regardless of race, language or culture. Although Christianity broke the bonds of narrow nationalism, Christians still have difficulties understanding why other Christians do not reflect the same cultural values as they. For example, why doesn't the member of the Black Pentecostal congregation appreciate the beautiful Victorian hymn translations of John Mason Neale set to

⁸ *Old Hymns Lined and Led* by Elder Walter Evans, Sparta, North Carolina. Sovereign Grace Recordings no. 6057. Side 1, band 1. Available from the Baptist Bible Hour, P.O. Box 17032, Cincinnati, Ohio 45217.

the tunes of Dykes or Barnby? And to put the question in reverse, why doesn't the largely white Episcopal congregation appreciate the emotionally-packed gospel music of the Black Pentecostals?

Sometimes one culture will take material from another and re-make it according to its own values. This has often been done, for example, with hymns of white origin by black gospel singers. A good illustration is Ernestine Washington's singing of the hymn of the English Catholic Thomas Moore, "Come, Ye Disconsolate," which the English Catholic organist Samuel Webbe set to music and published in 1792, and Lowell Mason and Thomas Hastings published in this country in 1831. This hymn and tune now appear in most American Protestant hymnals. We now hear a recording of a Black Pentecostal rendition of "Come, Ye Disconsolate" by Ernestine Washington at the Washington Temple Church of God in Christ in Brooklyn.⁹

Although ethnic diversity is an important factor in American hymnody, it is even more significant in the development of Christianity in such areas as Latin America, Africa and Asia. No longer are other nations satisfied to use merely American or English hymns translated into their tongues with the same music we use. Those concerned with foreign missions now generally recognize that Christian music must become indigenous in each nation if it is to lose its association with colonialism or foreign intervention.

A cultural approach to hymnody has the potential to add a significant dimension to hymnology. In this time of cultural pluralism there is a need to recognize cultural diversity as well as cross-cultural unity in hymnody. With the rise of anthropology and sociology we have the means of gaining new insights into the hymnody of those whose cultural values are different from ours. At the same time, there is less excuse for ignoring the cultural dimensions of hymnody and for merely down-grading hymnic expressions that don't fit the values held in the worship of our own congregations or our own personal tastes.

Perhaps it would be appropriate to reconsider our goals as hymnologists. Are we seeking merely to raise everybody else's standards of hymnody to those of our own or are we seeking to promote a greater understanding of hymnody in the light of its own cultural environment and function? On this fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Hymn Society of America, I believe it is appropriate for us to reconsider our purposes as related to helping our fellow Americans, regardless of cultural background, to participate in a vital and meaningful experience of spiritual expression through hymn singing.

⁹ Ernestine Washington, *Gospel Singing in Washington Temple*. Westminster WP-6089, Side 2, band 4.

Looking Ahead in Hymnody

WILLIAM WATKINS REID

THE "MARKED CHANGES in concerns, attitudes and points of view" of the American people—and indeed of men everywhere the world over—that were noted in 1922 when the Hymn Society of America was organized, have escalated in the 50 years since, and perhaps have increased in momentum and urgency in the last ten years of the period to a point nearing frustration. The questions and rumblings of 1922 were only a beginning of the social and intellectual revolutions that have affected every phase and facet of men's lives. No avenue of thought or action has not been influenced. We could dwell at length on the new attitudes, convictions, and aspirations of men in the areas of war and peace, hunger and abundance, social welfare and reform, the use and care of Earth's resources, the over-population of cities, the conservation of human life and the search for the "good life" for all, the employment of technology and all the sciences for humanitarian ends and not for selfish gain, power struggles, and destruction. . . .

Speaking in general terms, basic to all this revolution is an emphasis on, and search for, the welfare of the human race, for the identification of the individual as an important factor upon Earth—and the importance of all individuals in the sight of the Creator, despite race, color, or sex—and the freedom of each to aspire, to achieve, and to share in all the wealth—physical and spiritual—which the Creator has placed upon Earth, or with which he has endowed mankind. The revolution is in opposition to sham, to greed, to exploitation of man by man, to war, to power politics leading to war, to anything that impinges on the freedom of any man. This goal of the revolution is the highest known search of the human spirit: it is God-like and Christ-like.

Within the Christian church (and to some extent within the major non-Christian faiths) the challenge and revolution have been as much against the liturgies through which people worship and express their faith as against the basic concepts of religions' philosophies, theologies, depth and sincerity of expression, and "results" in men's lives—individually and communion-wide. And it has been found that

(Note: This article is taken from the report of the Executive Secretary of the Hymn Society of America presented at the annual meeting in New York City, May 1972.)

change for the sake of change alone is a handicap and has no value. In this questioning and re-evaluation of the church (both from within and from outside the church) the *hymnody* of the church, both texts and tunes, has been scrutinized, and criticized, and subjected to much experimentation. In this experimentation, some excellent new texts have been written and will probably live; but the bulk of the others probably will not survive into a second printing. Some worthy new tunes are available for future hymnals and worshippers; most of the new tunes will not replace good tunes with which worshippers are familiar. The general tendency of many of the new texts has been toward the use of more modern words, imagery, and even to colloquial and colorful "word pictures"—a sort of earthy visualization of ideas that hitherto have been expressed in more poetic or church-confined terminology. This new is often blunt, sometimes crude-sounding. While seeking to avoid sham, hypocrisy, and triteness, it is often as vague, involved, and difficult of understanding, as anything in the long-accepted hymnals. And many of its statements, allusions, and illustrations often warp both the images and truths of holy Scripture, modern theology, scientific discovery, and psychological knowledge. (This is not to say that there are not the same short-comings in some of the older "standard" hymns we refuse to discard.)

A major trend in tunes for new hymns has been to use folk-like melodies—often reminiscent of the gospel-song era, or of the plaintive plantation melodies, though there is also some linkage to joyous and dance compositions. Much has been written for guitars or other string instruments. This type of music has brought into participation in quasi-religious groups a much larger number of less-professionally-trained young people than was possible when church music was practically confined to the organ and the piano. The broadening of the instrumental field for hymns and religious songs has greatly increased the interest and numbers of groups of young people giving musical expression to their religious feelings. It has perhaps held more youth to "making a joyful noise to the Lord" than in some previous generations; though to the trained and sensitive musician it has often seemed a loss in true musical attainment. (There is another school of thought, however, that says if a larger number of young people become interested in music via the guitar there will be a greater number than heretofore to go on into a classical musical education.) And it can also be argued that if the end result of interest in simple music is growth in Christian life and concern, there is justification for the process. It may be a case of whether you want good grammar and fine music or an inspired and active Christian life. There seems to some to be evidence, however, that some of the mass exuberance and so-called free-

dom that has occasionally been accompanied by guitars, unruly hair, careless dress, and escape from the confining walls of church and home, have contributed little to religious dedication, to Christian understanding of God, or of devotion to God's purposes.

The attitude of the Hymn Society of America toward the new texts and tunes that have been appearing in recent years in quantities never before equalled in Christendom, is neither one of wholesale disapproval nor of wholesale acceptance. The Society recognizes the validity of much of the criticism of many texts in the "standard" hymns and hymnbooks—and the need to replace some of the "old favorites" with ideas and ideals more in harmony with modern science, modern psychology, modern ethics; and modern understanding of the Word of God, the nature of God, the relation of God and man, and the Christian's widening concept of the relationship God desires between man and brother man, as taught by Jesus. But these attributes and ideals seem to be found in relatively few of the new stanzas that have overwhelmed the printing presses—both commercial and church-owned—in recent years.

Nor is the Society ready to tear from the hymnals some of the "old" hymns that have given—men comfort and hope through decades and centuries, in order to make way for more "activist" hymns or tunes that may have only brief appeal and purpose. The rituals of the church, it is argued, must bestir the young and the active to new paths, new ideas, new endeavors, new conquests. And certain hymns—some old, some new—will be needed in revised rituals. But somewhere in its ritual, the church must endeavor to minister to the sick, to comfort the weary, the worn and faltering, the forsaken and rejected, to lead the lost and wandering to new paths, and to give those without hope an assurance for tomorrow. For much of this nurturing of the human spirit, *hymns from the past*—perhaps some recalled from a happier childhood—can do more effective healing than any new and relatively unknown text or tune of modern composition.

The Society believes that each generation should make its own unique contribution to the hymnody and to the whole liturgy of the church. The contribution should be based on the widening experiences of men—singly and in communities, to the growing revelations God is making to mankind, and to man's realization of his own needs, hopes, possibilities, and insights. The Christian faith is a viable, developing religion, and not a static set of rules and beliefs. God speaks in innumerable ways through innumerable people: each new revelation and each new truth must be set free to work among people. The church cannot be satisfied with repeating the prayers of the early

fathers, nor to confine its teachings and sermons to the thoughts and words of Luther, and Wesley, and Cotton Mather and the divines of earlier centuries. New conditions, new experiences, and new enlightenment demand new prayers and new sermons—relative to the day—from every clergyman and indeed, from every layman: and the same demand should be made for the hymns we sing. . . .

There are certain “standards” for the choice of subject matter, of words, of diction that can be used or cannot be used in the writing of a hymn, and writers of modern texts violate these at the risk of general non-acceptance of their compositions. And in many ways a hymn is far more difficult to write than is any other type of poetry because of these restrictions.

1. In the first place, a hymn is more a product of the heart than of the mind. It is not an exercise in literary skill. If the writer has not felt and experienced its sentiments, it lacks any conviction and any power to inspire, to challenge, or to comfort—and will not long live.

2. Simplicity of language is a basic necessity—language that is in common use and understood by persons in all levels of education. . . .

3. Carl Price, the first president of the Society, wrote that a hymn is a “lyric poem” and as such “should be simple and metrical in form, poetic in literary style, spiritual in quality, and in its ideas so direct and so immediately apparent as to unify a congregation while singing it.” The dictionaries define “poetic” as requiring intuition, great imaginative power, and beauty of thought and language. . . .

4. With the “product of the heart” and the simplicity and beauty of language with which that product is communicated, goes the fact that a true hymn is always a prayer reaching out from man to God and with the expectation that God will make reply to the hopes and aspirations of the singer-petitioner.

5. The text should be in accord with the truths and facts contained in the Bible, and not in conflict with the generally accepted theology of the Christian church. . . . Our hymns must not surrender to any prevailing *ism* of the day, and they must not in any way adulterate the meanings in the Bible. . . .

We do have some excellent musicians and composers in the Society, and they and many more are concerned with the cause of better hymn tunes. But my limited observation in this area has convinced me that more musicians should be writing hymn tunes than are presently doing so. And perhaps the Hymn Society of America should help make available a new channel for the communication of new

tunes to organists, choirs, and congregations. I would add a hope that some of the skill, time, and devotion now given by some composers to the writing of *anthems* on already well-anthemized texts, might be made available for new hymn tunes.

There is a great need today for new tunes—both for the new words that are coming into our churches and hymnals, and as replacement tunes to many texts that still have meaning, hope, encouragement, challenge and comfort for this and coming generations. The need is for tunes that express the spirit of the words: these range from the “still, small voice” to the thunder of warning and denunciation—from joy and satisfaction to determination to help build a better world. The need is for joyous tunes, marching-onward tunes, conquering tunes—and perhaps fewer of those we now have in minor keys and dragging lockstep.

If it is to be true to the purposes of its founding members, the Hymn Society must become more deeply involved in meeting the real hymnic needs of today and the years ahead. We need a five-year program, a ten-year program—perhaps a program that will carry us well toward our 100th year. That program must include communication of standards and principles to writers, composers, the clergy, the congregations—employing all the media available or to be created. The Society must go out with its message everywhere and continually: it cannot sit in its office and expect people to come to it for counsel and material; it has to develop an aggressive program for the writing of “better and more relevant hymns,” the composition of tunes to carry conviction, hope, and courage to men’s lives, and to the use of these hymns and tunes in the churches.

Many of the 2,000 plus members of the Society have proven creative and promotional skills. We need to devise ways in which these skills can be brought together effectively for the furtherance of the goals for which men and women have been enlisted. Specifically there is need in every part of the nation—perhaps in every state—for men and women:

- 1.—to serve on regional (state) membership committees recruiting new members.
- 2.—to organize chapters of the Society in centers and areas where a dozen or more concerned persons can meet for planning, counselling, and encouragement in the production and use of better hymns.
- 3.—to write and encourage the writing of hymns and tunes in the Society’s “searches,” by qualified and trained persons.
- 4.—to serve (either locally or nationally) on public relations committees for effective news and articles re new hymns (written or to

be written) in newspapers, church papers and bulletins, radio and television, and other means of communication.

The Society as a whole must in the near future give major attention to areas of communication which it has neglected because of lack of funds and personnel: the use of radio broadcasting, television, and perhaps recordings, in making known both its "searchers" for new material and in disseminating the actual production. . . . The whole field needs study by concerned experts in this rapidly changing method of reaching the minds and the hearts of the nation's and the world's people.

Meanwhile we cannot afford to neglect the values that lie in newspapers and the church press for the telling of the Society's story and plans. As we enter our second half-century we need a working publicity and public relations committee—probably in addition to one for television and radio. . . . Likewise the Society should initiate or renew efforts to have in every major theological seminary an instructor in hymnology, and courses designed to help young theologs appreciate excellence in hymns and liturgical and other worship materials—and hopefully to try to write new hymns. . . .

The "need" for new compositions in both texts and music that led to the formation of the Hymn Society of America in 1922 is intensified by the social and religious developments of the years since: it calls for an even more aggressive Society in the days ahead; it calls for the enlistment of every literary skill, every musical skill, and every organizational skill available, if our children and grandchildren are to continue to sing a "new song" and even a good "old song" unto the Lord.

YOUR SERVICE TO H. S. OF A.

There are (at least) three *services* that every member of the Hymn Society can render to the cause for which the Society was organized:

1. Send to the Executive Secretary the names and addresses of a group of concerned friends (including choir leaders, organists, pastors, administrators of church and school libraries) who should be invited to join the Society. The Executive Secretary will send them an invitation and literature; or he will send invitations and literature to *you* to give them—you choosing the method of approach.
2. Become a Life Member of the Society—and encourage friends to do the same. The cost is \$200: all new Papers, current and new groups of hymns, and the quarterly magazine *The Hymn* are mailed to all members.
3. Volunteer as a "committee member" taking responsibility to inform local churches, newspapers, writers, and composers in your community of current hymn projects of the Society.

Please check these "services"—and send your name to the Hymn Society of America (475 Riverside Drive, New York, N. Y. 10027) for listing and further communication as a volunteer in any of these capacities.

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chosen from hundreds of others for this text, was written by David McKay Williams, for years director of music in this church. By the next decade the Hymn Society of Great Britain was organized and extended its influence at home and abroad.

The Hymn Society of America seeks information concerning the origins of hymns and their authors, as well as aiding in problems which may confront persons interested in hymnody. This was brought pointedly to mind by a recent letter from a hymnal editor who sought the source of his slightly altered version of the definition of a hymn. Looking through several books proved fruitless, but it was recalled that Carl F. Price, one of the founders, and the first President of the Society, had written a Paper, "What Is A Hymn?" There, in the concluding paragraph was the statement sought. Such instances could be multiplied.

One writer notes that American hymnody is "decidedly ecumenical in spirit." This becomes self-evident as new hymnals are published. His statement, however, referred to Protestant hymnals. By now the ecumenical spirit has broadened and with the introduction of a vernacular liturgy in the Catholic Church, Catholic hymnals are including hymns from Protestant sources and finding inspiration from them.

We turn now to a new decade in the history of the Society, when "folk-hymnody" is a dominant factor. Many of these hymns are more for the moment than for the ages, but there is no doubt, something of permanent value will be sifted from what may be a fleeting period.

As we continue in the footsteps of the founders, again we dedicate ourselves to carrying on their ideas and ideals while striving to meet the needs of a new era. We live in a hope so aptly expressed in a hymn by a member of the Society. He writes:

Spirit of life, in this new dawn,
Give us faith that follows on
Letting thine all-pervading power
Fulfil the dreams of this high hour.—*Earl Marlatt*

(Note: This message is part of the address made by President J. Vincent Higginson at the Society's 50th anniversary service in St. Bartholomew's Church, New York City on May 7, 1972.)

Dr. Luther D. Reed Passes

The Rev. Dr. Luther Dotterer Reed, vice-president emeritus of the Hymn Society of America, and regarded as the leading Lutheran authority on hymnody, liturgics, and architecture, died in Philadelphia, on April 3, 1972—two weeks after his 99th birthday. On his birthday he was reported to have said to friends that he hoped to see “another Easter”—and death came on the day after Easter Sunday.

Dr. Reed's active ministry spanned 76 years. During periods of those years he had been a pastor, a professor (liturgics and fine arts) at the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia, president of the Seminary, founder of the Lutheran Liturgical Association and its president, president of the Church Music and Liturgical Art Society, president of the Associated Bureau of Church Architecture in the U.S.A. and Canada, and long a vice-president of the Hymn Society of America.

Dr. Reed will long be remembered for his editorship and contributions made to the “Service Book and Hymnal” of the Lutheran Church in America, and of the American Lutheran Church—the hymnal now in its 13th edition, used by 11,000 congregations. His volume “The Lutheran Liturgy,” is considered the most authoritative work in English on Lutheran liturgy, church art and design. He was an honorary member of the American Guild of Organists, and of the Church Architectural Guild of America.

Born in North Wales, Pa., March 21, 1873, Luther Dotterer Reed graduated from Franklin and Marshall College at Lancaster, Pa., in 1892 and from Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia in 1895. He studied at the University of Leipzig in Germany in 1902, and in later years traveled throughout Europe to study liturgics, church music and church architecture.

An article, “Dr. Reed Reaches Ninety-Eight” appeared in *The Hymn* of July 1971 from the pen of William A. Dudde, an associate in the Philadelphia Chapter of the Hymn Society of America. An article from Dr. Reed's pen, “An Interpretation of Hymnody,” was printed in *The Hymn* of October 1971. He had been active in both writing and speaking up to the last few weeks of life.

FORM OF BEQUEST IN YOUR WILL

“I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to the *Hymn Society of America*, a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York, the sum of dollars (\$), the same to be applied to the general uses and purposes of said corporation under the direction of its Board of Trustees; and I do hereby direct that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of said corporation shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors for the same.”

(The address of the Treasurer of the corporation is as follows: Ralph Mortensen, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N. Y. 10027)

Amazing "Amazing Grace"

"Amazing Grace," one of the best known hymns in America, has recently become the most popular song in England and continental Europe.

A recording, made without lyrics, by the band of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, a British regiment stationed in Germany, topped the charts in mid-April. As a single record, the song was issued in the U.S. by RCA. A representative of the company said that (as of April 17) 375,000 copies had sold in England, and 9,000 copies in three days in Australia.

The bagpipe version of the hymn sounds quite familiar to Americans. In addition to being a standard song for congregational singing, it was a popular hit recently as sung by folk singer Judy Collins.

Written by the Rev. John Newton, an Anglican rector in London, the words to "Amazing Grace" first appeared in 1779 among a collection called "Olney Hymns." Several tunes for the ode are on record. The most familiar is an early American melody linked to the *Sacred Harp* tradition.

The words came to America in the early 1800's and when coupled with the easily-sung tune became one of the most widely used camp-meeting songs. Some lines not written by Newton emerged in time and now appear in some hymns with no denotation of separate authorship. According to hymnologists, the line beginning, "When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun," was not written by Newton, but was added before 1859 when it appeared in an edition of *The Sacred Harp* by John P. Rees.

The familiar tune is now generally traced to the South. It was first published in *Virginia Harmony* in 1831.

PRESIDENT NIXON SAID

On the eve of the 1972 annual meeting of the Hymn Society of America, the President of the United States sent the following telegram to President J. Vincent Higginson and the members of the Society: "My congratulations to the Hymn Society of America on this half-century mark in your splendid volunteer service. The inspiration that fellow citizens have derived from your efforts can be the greatest source of satisfaction to you as you look back over the rewarding history of your organization. I warmly commend your contributions to the spirit of worship in our nation, and wish you every future success in your worthwhile endeavors."

(Signed) *Richard M. Nixon*

The 1972 Annual Meeting

The 1972 annual meeting of the Hymn Society in America was held in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, on May 6. President Higginson was in the chair, and Dr. Anastasia Van Burkalow recorded. From Dr. Van Burkalow's minutes the following "highlights" are reported here.

The Membership Committee reported the new members elected in 1971-2 as follows: Regular members 91; Student members, 28; Library members, 24; Foreign members, 10; Life members 1; total, 154.

The total membership was 2,085 on April 30, and were thus classified: Regular members 1,333; Student members 171; Library members 212; Supporting members 101; Life members 90; Exempt 27; Foreign members 151.

Material for the Exhibition commemorating the 50th anniversary was prepared by the Archivist and others. Documents illustrating the early years of the Society, the hymn projects, Papers of the Society, hymn tunes published were featured. Contributions of valuable material have been received; particularly sets of books concerning Wesley, Isaac Watts and the Olney Hymns were presented by Francis O. Rainville of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and books relating to early Mennonite Hymnody from Martin E. Ressler of Quarryville, Pennsylvania, and Wilmer Swope, of Leetonia, Ohio. "Assembling such material for the exhibit makes one realize how precious are many items relating to American hymnody found in the archives."

OFFICERS

J. Vincent Higginson, M.A., F.H.S.A., Long Island City, N.Y., President

Rev. Frank O. Reed, B.Litt., Salisbury, Connecticut, 1st Vice-President

Miss Jean Woodward Steele, A.B., F.H.S.A., Philadelphia, Pa., 2nd Vice-President

Leonard Ellinwood, Ph.D., F.H.S.A., Washington, D.C., 3rd Vice-President

Rev. Ralph Mortensen, Ph.D., Southington, Connecticut, Treasurer

Rev. Charles B. Foelsch, Ph.D., New York, N.Y., Chairman, Executive Committee

William Watkins Reid, M.A., F.H.S.A., Whitestone, N.Y., Executive-Secretary

Four persons were elected Fellows of the Hymn Society of America: Dr. Lee Hastings Bristol, Jr., of Princeton, N.J.; Dr. George Litch Knight, of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Miss Jean Woodward Steele, of Philadelphia; and Mrs. Shirley L. Brown, of Concord, Mass.

Report of the Philadelphia Chapter was presented by Howard R. Stringer, President, reviewing the active program of that chapter. Report of the New Orleans Baptist Seminary Chapter, another group with an active program, was presented by Dr. Harry Eskew. Dr. Ellinwood reported on his work on the *Dictionary of American Hymnology* for the year 1971.

The Executive Secretary of the Society and co-editor of *The Hymn*, then presented a talk on "Hymns Today and Tomorrow." (See report in this issue)

Dr. Foelsch announced a gift to the Society—the manuscript for *A Companion for American Catholic Hymnals*, and a fund towards publication. This manuscript was written by our president, Mr. Higginson, who spoke briefly about his long work on this project and his gratitude to a dear friend who is anonymously contributing the fund for its publication. He spoke also of the improvement in recent years in congregational singing in Catholic churches. Dr. Foelsch then presided briefly to accept a motion expressing the Society's congratulations to Mr. Higginson upon the completion of this great task, and its grateful acceptance of the gift.

Dr. Harry Eskew presented a paper on "A Cultural Understanding of Hymnody." (see article in this issue).

Father Lawrence J. Madden, S.J., spoke on "Folk Hymnody in Practice." He reported on his experiences in planning worship services that include a mixture of styles, using organ, piano, and guitar for accompaniment. In this way it is possible to appeal to different age groups, both old and young. The only requirements needed are that the music be good and that it be true to its own style. It is useful to recognize the difference between the permanent hymnic treasures that have come to us from the ages, and what Father Madden called "disposable" music—useful here and now for a particular group but not to be

kept and handed on to other groups. Several taped recordings were played to illustrate types of music used in his services. Father Madden emphasized the role of music as a vehicle for prayer. A general discussion followed this talk.

Mr. Higginson read a letter from Shirley Brown, who is working with young people, reminding the Society of the need to look for "New ways of praising God" and yet "to keep us close to the scriptures as possible."

The final talk of the day was presented by Dr. Carleton Sprague Smith whose topic was "American Hymns—Old and New." Dr. Smith questioned the true nature and value of the so-called "folk music" being used in worship services. It is often recommended on the grounds that it "seems to work." But is it perhaps a "cultural drug" to which the young people have become addicted by the mass media? Dr. Smith then went on to describe the nature and purpose of his book, *American Hymns—Old and New—an anthology*—which will be published within the next few months. He spoke of the value of giving recognition to the unique contributions and needs of individual denominations and noted that over-emphasizing the concept of ecumenicity may cause us to overlook the need for selecting hymns "appropriate" to the needs of specific groups. The value of familiarity with our heritage from the past was also considered, and Dr. Smith read a number of selections from early American hymns, most of which we have tended to neglect. Discussion followed.

